

8 Town School Consolidation Committee  
November 19, 2019  
Stockbridge Town Hall

DRAFT

The following committee members and audience members were present: N. Hawver—Sheffield-Selectman, T. White—New Marlborough-Selectman, M. Ryan—West Stockbridge-Town Administrator, P. Dillon—BHRSD Superintendent, R. Long—New Marlborough, G. McGurn—Egremont-Selectman, L. Prashker—Alford-Committee Member, Ed Abrahams—Great Barrington-Selectman, B. Silvers—SBRSD School Committee, M. Thomas—BHRSD School Committee, Dennis Sears—SBRSD School Committee, H. Bellow—Berkshire Eagle, C. Ketchen—Alford-Selectman, R. Wood—Sheffield Selectman, R. Dohoney—BHRSD School Committee, J. Bruno—SBRSD School Committee, S. Gregory—Great Barrington (audience), B. Regulbuto—SBRSD Superintendent and J. Sylbert—Monterey—Committee Member.

The minutes of the October 15, 2019 minutes were approved.

A discussion ensued on the information that was presented at the October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. The following were the comments on the proposals:

- 1) Do we hire someone or do we follow the process letting the Towns do this by forming a Regional District Planning Committee?
- 2) School Committees would need to be involved
- 3) Discuss a formal process
- 4) SBRSD has already formed a Regional School Planning Committee, but hasn't organized it yet; BHRSD has not.
- 5) Option 3 where Towns form a Regional District Planning Committee appears to be the best way to proceed. This forms a whole new district, not one district absorbing another.
- 6) The committee would consist of 1 school committee member from each Town and 2 at-large members from each Town for a total of 24 members. The Select Board in each Town would ask for volunteers and recommend the 2 at-large members to the moderator for appointment. He would also appoint the school committee member.
- 7) Group (when formed) would need a facilitator going forward and there would be sub-committees set up to look at various aspects of a possible consolidation.
- 8) When this new group is formed and ratified, this group will dissolve.

Jon Sylbert made the following motion which was seconded by L. Prashker:

To go forward with Option #3 as previously presented at the October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. That motion reads as follows:

Option 3—Towns form a Regional District Planning Committee (Chapter 71, Section 14). Regional District Planning Committee from two or more towns may join together to form a Regional School District Planning Board. (Chapter 71, Section 14A and 14B)

There was some discussion after the motion that this was not a legal way to proceed and needed to be presented to DESE (Dept. of Elementary/Secondary Education) before moving forward. Clarity on the motion was requested before moving ahead.

This motion passed and is conditional on receiving clarity and confirmation that this is a legal Option for the Towns to move forward with.

Tara reported that Jeff Wulfson from DESE said they did have some money for school regionalization, but the date for applying for this has passed. There may be a second round of funding after the current applications have been reviewed. He said to check back in December. This would need to be awarded to an official group. The existing group would not do any hiring—the new group would be responsible for this.

Towns could, while awaiting confirmation, begin looking for at-large members in their Towns. A question arose about a Town with only 1 school committee member—what if that member couldn't serve on this committee, could another at-large member be appointed? A template for all the Towns to follow will be developed.

Rene Wood thanked the committee for the tremendous amount of work that they have done and hope that the members will still be available to share their knowledge with the new working group once it is formed. All school committee members represent all residents in their Towns and, if a school committee member couldn't represent their Town, could another school committee member from a member town be appointed.

Next steps: Ms. Hawver will contact Christine Lynch and Glenn Koocher with the questions raised at this meeting, the legality of the vote taken.

The next meeting (if needed) will be December 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm at the Stockbridge Town Hall.

Respectively Submitted:

Tara White  
Town of New Marlborough Representative